

"Moon of Israel"

by
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A New Masterpiece by
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CHAPTER I.

Scribe Ana Comes to Tanis.

THIS is the story of me, Ana the scribe, son of Meri, and of certain of the days that I have spent upon the earth. These things I have written down now that I am very old in the reign of Rameses, the third of that name, when Egypt is once more strong and as she was in ancient time. I have written them before death takes me, that they may be buried with me in death, for as my spirit shall arise in the hour of resurrection, so also these my words arise in their hour and tell to those who shall come after me upon the earth of what I knew upon the earth. Let it be as those in heaven shall decree. At least I write and what I write is true.

I tell of his divine Majesty whom I loved and love as my own soul, Seti Meneptah the second, whose day of birth was my day of birth, the Hawk, who has flown to heaven before me; of Useriti the Proud, his queen, she who afterward married his divine Majesty Saptah, whom I saw laid in her tomb at Thebes. I tell of Merapi, who was named Moon of Israel, and of her people, the Hebrews, who dwelt for long in Egypt and departed thence, having paid us back in loss and shame for all the good and ill we gave them. I tell of the war between the gods of Egypt and the god of Israel, and of much that befell therein.

Also I, the King's Companion, the great scribe, the beloved of the Pharaohs who have lived beneath the sun with me, tell of other men and matters. Behold! Is it not written in this roll? Read, ye who shall find in the days unborn, if the gods have given you skill. Read, O children of the future, and learn the secrets of that past which to you is so far away and yet in truth so near.

As it chanced, although the Prince Seti and I were born upon the same day and therefore, like the other mothers of gentle-rank whose children saw the light upon that day, my mother received Pharaoh's gift and I received the title of Royal Twin in Ra, never did I set eyes upon the divine Prince Seti until the thirtieth birthday of both of us. All of which happened thus.

In those days the great Pharaoh, Rameses the second, and after him his son Meneptah, who succeeded when he was already old,

"From among the throng sprang out a girl, young and very lovely, although she was but roughly clad. Never, I think, did Merapi, Moon of Israel, look more beautiful than in this hour of her slavery. Her large eyes, neither blue nor black, caught the light of the moon and were as swim with tears. The plentiful bronze-hued hair flowed in great curls over the snow-white bosom that her rough robe revealed. Her delicate hand was lifted as though to ward off the blows which fell upon him whom she sought to protect."

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